

## Reminder

President Carter has asked every American to lower the heat in all homes & buildings to no more than 18 degrees C (65 degrees F) during the day & to reduce heat even more at night. The President said: "This single step, if carried out by all people, can eliminate half the current shortage of natural gas & put thousands of Americans back to work." He added: "... [T]his is not a temporary request for conservation. Our energy problems will not be over next year or the year after. Further sacrifices... may well be necessary."

## Gas furnaces

**Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)** has denied a petition to develop mandatory safety standards for gas furnaces & gas conversion furnaces to reduce the hazard of carbon monoxide fumes.

CPSC says a device that will shut off gas appliances when abnormal amounts of carbon monoxide are present is not practicable or economically feasible. At the same time, however, CPSC hopes that industry will undertake research & development that would lead to an inexpensive and reliable carbon monoxide detector.

On July 7, 1976, Michael Smith of Elk Grove Village, IL, wrote CPSC requesting a standard that would keep carbon monoxide fumes out of a residence in the event of a furnace failure that might occur as a result of improper burner adjustment, improper installation, a collapsed chimney or malfunction of the furnace. Smith suggested that the requested standard should include a requirement for a device to warn residents that they are being exposed to carbon monoxide.

On the basis of information available to CPSC, it appears that the majority of carbon monoxide poisoning cases connected with gas furnaces may result from improperly installed or maintained furnaces or damaged or blocked vents.

## S-p-r-e-a-d-i-n-g the word

President Carter or Vice President Mondale is expected to speak at 12:30 p.m. Feb. 11 at Consumer Federation of America's Consumer Assembly '77. Others invited to address the assembly are Agriculture Secretary Bergland, Transportation Secretary Adams, President's Energy Advisor Schlesinger, Treasury Secretary Blumenthal & Senator Hollings. In addition to speeches, there will be 9 workshops. Assembly will be Feb. 9-11 at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC. For registration information, contact Consumer Federation of America, 1012 14th St. NW, Washington, DC 20005; phone: 202-737-3732.

# consumer news

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
Office of Consumer Affairs

Vol. 7, No. 3, Feb. 1, 1977

## Agriculture names consumer committee

Seventeen persons have been named to serve on **Agriculture Dept.'s new National Consumer Advisory Committee** to advise Agriculture on (1) consumer policy, (2) effectiveness of Agriculture's efforts to consider consumer viewpoints in making policy changes, (3) consumer problems & (4) means by which consumer needs can be met by Agriculture. Committee was established by Agriculture's Consumer Representation Plan on Sept. 28, 1976 [CONSUMER REGISTER: Oct. 15, 1976, & Dec. 1, 1975]. It will be in effect for 2 years & will meet twice a year. It will report to the Secretary through an Assistant Secretary.

Committee members are: Mercedes A. Bates of Minneapolis, MN; Hassell G. Bradley of Littleton, CO; Zoe Coulson of New York, NY; Treesa W. Drury of Tujunga, CA; Naomi Faison of Summit, NJ; Solomon Harge of Cleveland, OH; Laura L. Heuser of Hartford, MN;

Dean H. Hill of Chevy Chase, MD; Mary Kittel of Fort Worth, TX; Sylvia Lane of Davis, CA; Michael Marge of Syracuse, NY; Beatrice G. Marks of San Francisco, CA; Mary Ellen McFarland of St. Paul, MN; Currin V. Shields of Tucson, AZ; Rosalyn L. Schoonmaker of Wallkill, NY; James S. Turner of Washington, DC; Jane Wyatt of Salem, OR.

To contact the committee, contact Special Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture for Consumer Affairs, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250; phone 202-447-3165.

## Supreme Court says

CONSUMER NEWS has learned that certain information in the "Supreme Court says" article in the Jan. 15 issue, was inaccurate. The corrected article is as follows:

**Supreme Court** has upheld a provision of the Social Security Act that pertains to "wife's insurance benefits." This provision grants "wife's insurance benefits" to a married woman under age 62 who is responsible for a dependent child when her husband retires or becomes disabled. Court ruled that this same provision is indeed legal in denying such "wife's insurance benefits" to a divorced woman under age 62 with a dependent child when her ex-husband retires or becomes disabled. A divorced woman in Illinois challenged this Social Security provision on the grounds that the disparity in treatment between married & divorced women violated her equal rights protection under the due process clause of the US Constitution.

This ruling does not affect the right of dependent children to receive "child's insurance benefits" when such children otherwise satisfy existing legal requirements. Under the Social Security law, a divorced woman is entitled to "wife's insurance benefits" when her ex-husband retires or becomes disabled if she is 62 years of age or older & was married for 20 years before the effective date of the divorce.

(Persons with particular questions about this or a similar situation involving a divorced woman should contact a local **Social Security** office.)

## Complaint handling

On Jan. 17 **Office of Consumer Affairs** (OCA) released the findings of Phase II of an independent study of consumer complaint-handling mechanisms of 7 Federal agencies involved in providing goods, services &/or benefits to consumers. Agencies are **Veterans Administration, National Park Service, Social Security Administration, Social & Rehabilitation Service, Office of Education, Manpower Administration & Public Health Service.**

This study, conducted by Technical and Research Programs Inc. (TARP) under contract for OCA, also reports the results of a survey of American consumers' experiences with consumer complaints. Of greatest significance was the finding that a majority of the consumers who had a problem during the survey period did not have their problem resolved by one of the 7 Federal agencies in a satisfactory manner. Because of this finding, OCA will recommend improvements in the complaint-handling mechanism of each agency.

Phase I of the study, which was released in June 1975, evaluated complaint-handling performances of 15 Federal agencies that deal with consumers in the marketplace (such as **Food & Drug Administration, Consumer Product Safety Commission & Civil Aeronautics Board.**)

Phases III & IV of the study are scheduled for completion later this year. They will review complaint-handling mechanisms of state & local governments, business organizations, voluntary groups & Federal Government field offices.

For a summary of the new study, contact TARP, Office of Consumer Affairs, Washington, DC 20201; phone 202-245-6975. OCA plans to have copies of the complete report available in the spring.

## Land refunds

Certain consumers who bought land in 3 developments since Jan. 1, 1972, will share \$4 million in refunds from Great Western United Corp., which allegedly misrepresented the value of land in its developments: California City, CA; Colorado City, CO; & Cochiti Lake, NM.

Refunds are part of a **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** consent order against the developer. Consent order also requires the company to spend \$16 million over the next 10 years to build roads, provide gas & sewage facilities & construct recreational facilities & other buildings in the developments. Also, the company has agreed to pay the costs of arbitration for any future disputes with consumers.

Great Western United has to pay the US Treasury a civil penalty of \$50,000. Penalty & other parts of the consent order are a result of alleged violations of a 1972 consent order.

## A primer to help you understand coffee prices

It will not change coffee prices or help your budget, but the following **CONSUMER NEWS** report on coffee production—past & future—may give you some information to toss at friends over a cup of tea:

Coffee has a long history as a boom-or-bust commodity. The 1950's were characterized by high prices & vast new plantings; the 1960's by low prices, massive carryover stocks & a curtailment of new plantings. The 1970's have seen a generally rising price level & a resumption of new plantings on a substantial scale, particularly in Brazil & other Latin American countries. New techniques of plantings, which permit greater mechanization & use of increased amounts of fertilizer, have contributed to the general upward trend of world coffee production. This trend is demonstrated by the fact that world production during 1970-75 was up nearly 10 million bags per year, compared with the preceding 5-year period. About half of this increase in production occurred in Brazil, thereby setting the stage for another cycle of over-production & depressed prices. Prices had begun to respond by declining from mid-1974 to early July 1975, when the price dropped to 60¢ per pound (un-roasted beans). On July 17 & 18, 1975, a frost struck Brazil's major coffee producing states of Sao Paulo, Parana & Minas Gerais. Thereafter, prices immediately began to rise.

It appears from the best available information that the 1976-1977 crop of Brazilian coffee will be greatly reduced. Brazilian estimates place total production at 5 to 6.5 million bags, while US experts estimate 9 to 10.5 million bags. Moreover, Brazil's 1977-1978 crop will also be significantly less than normal, since the hundreds of millions of trees, which were saved by pruning, will need more than a year to recuperate. Given the 3 to 4 years growing period of newly planted trees, it appears unlikely that Brazilian production potential will be restored to its pre-frost level prior to 1979.

Forecasts made by **US Agriculture Dept.** place the 1976-1977 coffee harvests for Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean at 5% above the record crop of 1974-1975. Costa Rica crop is estimated to be 200,000 bags greater than the 1975-1976 crop of 1.3 million bags. El Salvador's 1976-1977 crop will equal the record 3.3 million bags of this year. Guatemala will increase its production 23% to 2.6 million bags in 1976-1977. Production increases are also expected in Honduras, Mexico & Nicaragua.

In Africa, an increase in production of Ivory Coast coffee will be the principal reason for an overall increase in African coffee production in the 1976-1977 crop year.

In Asia, India's 1976-1977 crop should exceed the 1975-1976 crop by nearly 20%, despite the effects of the lack of rain. The Phillipines will produce more coffee than its 1975-1976 crop.

Generally speaking, it appears that coffee producing countries, with the exception of Brazil, will produce at least as much coffee, or more, than was produced in 1975-1976. Given these anticipated increases in production, it does not appear that critical coffee shortages will occur next year—even with the Brazilian shortfall of 10 million bags—unless the stocks on reserve throughout the world are depleted by speculation buying.

## CBs in Mexico

In a change in policy, Mexico, according to **US State Dept.**, is now allowing US citizens to drive into Mexico with a car CB radio. Previously, Mexican border authorities either removed CB radios from cars or sealed them to make them inoperative [**CONSUMER NEWS**: June 15 & Aug. 15, 1976]. State says US citizens still cannot use CBs in Mexico without a license from the Mexican government, which, however, does not issue CB licenses to foreigners.

## Federal offices converting to metric system

Federal Government has become actively involved in metric conversion. A number of agencies have announced metrification plans & proposals. For instance, **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** has issued a report that recommends a 3-phase "plan of attack" to usher in the general use of the metric system. Report calls for EPA to (1) promote agency awareness of the metric system & persuade employees of its usefulness & inevitability; (2) develop specific conversion policies & draft the necessary orders; (3) carry out the conversion within a detailed & flexible time schedule.

To facilitate conversion, **Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC)** now permits truck, train & bus companies to file rates & reports that include metric units of measurement in place of customary units. Reports submitted to ICC must contain easily understood conversion tables that explain standards & methods used for conversion.

Many other agencies now permit reports, specifications & other documents & information to contain both customary & metric units wherever practicable. Other agencies have appointed task forces or designated individuals to coordinate or oversee interdepartmental metric activities. Below is a list of metric coordination officials in the Federal Government.

### **Agriculture Dept.**

Robert A. Owen  
Foreign Agriculture Service  
Washington, DC 20250  
202-447-5531

### **Central Intelligence Agency**

Leo. W. Sweeney  
Office of Economic Research  
Washington, DC 20505  
202-351-5208

### **Civil Aeronautics Board**

Dr. Samuel L. Brown  
Bureau of Accounting & Statistics  
Washington, DC 20428  
202-673-5148

### **Commission of Fine Arts**

Charles H. Atherton  
707 Jackson Place NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
202-343-5324

### **Commodity Futures Trading Commission**

Richard C. Garner  
Office of Management & Finance  
Washington, DC 20581  
202-254-6599

### **Community Services Administration**

Alan O. Mann  
Office of Administration  
Washington, DC 20506  
202-254-5330

### **Consumer Product Safety Commission**

James J. Price  
Bureau of Engineering Sciences  
5401 Westbard Ave.  
Bethesda, MD 20207  
301-492-6524

### **Defense Dept.**

Donald R. Mitchell  
Defense Materiel Specifications & Standards Office  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703-274-6337

### **Energy Research & Development Administration**

Eldon P. Nowstrup  
Division of Safety, Standards & Compliance  
Washington, DC 20545  
202-353-3131

### **Environmental Protection Agency**

John A. Alter  
Management & Organization Division  
Washington, DC 20460  
202-755-0855

### **Export-Import Bank of the US**

Albert H. Hamilton  
Washington, DC 20571  
202-382-2179

### **Farm Credit Administration**

Paul C. Redmer  
Administrative Division  
Washington, DC 20578  
202-755-2150

### **Federal Communications Commission**

Ronald S. Stone  
Office of the Chief Engineer  
Washington, DC 20554  
202-632-2080

### **Federal Energy Administration**

Thomas R. Daugherty  
National Energy Information Center  
Washington, DC 20461  
202-961-8695

### **Federal Maritime Commission**

Andrew H. Weissler  
Bureau of Industry Economics  
Washington, DC 20573  
202-523-5865

### **Federal Power Commission**

Walter S. Lusby  
Chief Engineer  
Washington, DC 20426  
202-275-4822

### **Federal Reserve System**

John M. Denkler  
Staff Director for Management  
Washington, DC 20551  
202-453-3764

### **Federal Trade Commission**

Robert H. Jones  
Administrative Services Division  
Washington, DC 20580  
202-523-3699

### **General Services Administration**

Grant E. Beattie  
Federal Supply Service  
Washington, DC 20406  
202-557-0506

### **Government Printing Office**

Joseph A. Palank  
Director of Engineering  
Washington, DC 20401  
202-275-2402

### **Housing & Urban Development Dept.**

Arthur S. Newburg  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research & Demonstration  
Washington, DC 20410  
202-755-5561

### **Interior Dept.**

Hollis B. Vail  
Office of Management Consulting  
Washington, DC 20240  
202-343-7544

### **International Trade Commission**

Robert A. Cornell  
Office of Trade & Industry  
Washington, DC 20436  
202-523-0405

### **Interstate Commerce Commission**

Martin E. Foley  
Bureau of Traffic  
Washington, DC 20423  
202-275-7348

### **Justice Dept.**

Thompson S. Crockett  
Office of Management & Finance  
Washington, DC 20530  
202-739-2341

### **Labor Dept.**

Bruce Millen  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Evaluation & Research  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-523-6049

### **Library of Congress**

Floyd D. Hedrick  
Procurement & Supply Division  
Washington, DC 20541  
202-426-5180

### **National Aeronautics & Space Administration**

Peppino N. Vlannes  
Scientific & Technical Information Office  
Washington, DC 20546  
202-755-3551

### **National Labor Relations Board**

Paul E. Long  
Acting Director of Administration  
Washington, DC 20570  
202-254-9200

### **Nuclear Regulatory Commission**

Laurids Porse  
Office of Standards Development  
Washington, DC 20555  
202-443-6927

### **Office of Education**

Dr. Floyd Davis  
Metric Education Program  
Washington, DC 20202  
202-245-3352

### **Postal Service**

John J. Wise  
Research & Development Department  
1171 Parklawn Dr.  
Rockville, MD 20852  
301-443-6019

### **Securities & Exchange Commission**

Richard J. Kanyan  
Office of Administrative Services  
Washington, DC 20549  
202-755-1324

### **Small Business Administration**

Robert J. Moffitt  
Office of Procurement Assistance  
Washington, DC 20416  
202-653-6637

### **Smithsonian Institution**

Phillip K. Reiss  
Facilities Planning & Engineering Services  
955 L'Enfant Plaza  
Washington, DC 20024  
202-381-6333

### **State Dept.**

Michael H. Goldman  
Office of Special Trade Activities & Commercial Treaties Division  
Washington, DC 20520  
202-632-0641

### **Transportation Dept.**

Robert L. Paullin  
Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20590  
202-426-4224

### **Treasury Dept.**

Robert R. Fredlund  
Director of Administrative Programs  
Washington, DC 20220  
202-964-2881

### **US Information Agency**

Robert P. Walker  
Management Analyst  
Washington, DC 20547  
202-632-6680

### **Veterans Administration**

Robert W. Poe  
Department of Medicine & Surgery  
Washington, DC 20420  
202-389-2247

## Metric reference

American National Metric Council (ANMC) has published a pamphlet for consumers on the metric system. A *Metric Reference for Consumers* covers a number of metric related issues, such as packaging, pricing & consumer impact. It reviews the history of metric, US involvement in metrification & legislation. Booklet also contains a glossary of metric terms. Single copies are available free from the American National Metric Council, 1625 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036; phone: 202-232-4545. Contact ANMC for quantity rates.



## Recalls

• **TIRES**—Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. of Akron, OH 44316, announces recall of 500 tires produced during latter part of week of Oct. 31, 1976 (date code 446), & early part of week of Nov. 7, 1976 (date code 456). Defective material used in these tires may cause an impact break in some of the tires, resulting in sudden loss of air & vehicle crash without warning. Tires are identified as follows: 10.00-20 Load Range F Super Hi-Miler Nylon tubetype tires carrying serial numbers MJ2JCTA446 & MJ2JCTA456; 10.00-22 Load Range F Hi-Miler Xtra Grip Nylon tubetype tires carrying serial numbers MJ27D8A446 & MJ27D8A456. What to do: get in touch with your local Goodyear dealer for free replacement & mounting.

• **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**—Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announces another recall of 1970 model FE18UL fire extinguishers manufactured by Bernzomatic Corp., 740 Driving Park Ave., Rochester, NY 14613. Foam extinguisher container is red with white lettering & measures 73 millimeters (2¾ inches) in diameter & 190 millimeters (7½ inches) in height. Extinguishers, which cost about \$2.49, were sold in variety & chain stores throughout the US during 1970 & 1971, but mainly in the northeast part of the country. Reason for recall: Solution inside container corrodes, which may cause extinguisher to rupture & explode. (Company has changed formula of the solution, & corrosion is no longer a problem.) Company urges anyone owning a 1970 foam fire extinguisher to discharge contents before returning it to company (address above) for no charge replacement.

# Calendar

## Federal Register

**Office of the Federal Register (OFR)** announces 6 separate workshops in Los Angeles & San Francisco on "The *Federal Register*—What It Is & How To Use It." Each workshop session is identical:

Los Angeles-9:30 a.m. Feb. 23,  
24 & 25  
Room 8544, Federal Bldg.  
300 N. Los Angeles St.

## New Federal Publications

*How to Talk to Your Teenager About Drinking & Driving*, published by **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** in cooperation with the National Congress of Parents & Teachers. Free from Consumer Information Center, Dept. 515E, Pueblo, CO 81009.

*1977 Gas Mileage Guide*, published by **Environmental Protection Agency & Federal Energy Administration**. Free from Consumer Information Center, Dept. 632E, Pueblo, CO 81009. For free special edition for California, write to Consumer Information Center, Dept. 633E, Pueblo, CO 81009.

*A Guide to Budgeting for the Family*, published by **Agriculture Dept.** 35¢ from Consumer Information Center, Dept. 81E, Pueblo, CO 81009.

*Solar Energy & Your Home*, published by **Housing & Urban Development Dept.** Free from Consumer Information Center, Dept. 646E, Pueblo, CO 81009.

*How To Avoid Pyramid & Ponzi Schemes*, published by **Securities & Exchange Commission**. Free from Consumer Information Center, Dept. 600E, Pueblo, CO 81009.

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